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FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Interventions for Struggling Students

Claxton Middle School, Georgia • April 20, 2008

Topic: National Math Panel: Critical Foundations for Algebra
Practice: Mastery Framework

Highlights

- Use of test analysis for re-teaching
- Use of prescriptive remediation in extended learning time math, including types of support
- Re-teaching skills when students haven't mastered a topic with schoolwide example of fractions, decimals, percents
- Placing students within a four-tiered pyramid of interventions; what's available at different tiers
- Moving students fluidly across intervention levels
- Use of whole faculty study groups to address common errors

About the Site

Claxton Middle School
Claxton, GA

Demographics
47% Black

41% White
12% Hispanic
75% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch
4% English Language Learners
17% Special Education

Claxton has implemented strategies geared toward ensuring that students receive intensive support to master skills including:

- Hands-on practical demonstrations and activities that engage students who are struggling with mathematics,
- Praise-prompt-leave strategy for encouraging struggling students,
- Various types of formative assessments in daily use,
- Consistent use of the six elements of an effective mathematics lesson and Tennessee Instructional method,
- Philosophy of 100% correction of mistakes,
- Four-tier pyramid of interventions and technology-based prescriptive remediation,
- Fluid movement of students across supports based on frequent assessments, and
- Daily 90-minute period for re-teaching of mathematics.

Full Transcript

My name is Bootsie Threatte, and I am the math department chair at Claxton Middle School, where I also teach 6th, 7th, and 8th grade support math.

Benchmark exams are based on standards. As teachers look at the test analysis, we determine what should be re-taught and how that should be done. In our process, the teachers complete a test analysis and look at the percentages of the non-mastered items. Students are given a prescriptive remediation during their extended learning time math—that is, what we call our support math—where they focus on the weak areas as they work in different programs on the computer such as ClassZONE, BrainPOP, they can go to Teacher Web; they also receive one-on-one tutoring. The classroom teachers and the math department chair plan collaboratively weekly, and we discuss targeted students and make recommendations for strategies for the upcoming week for each of us to employ. There are also prescriptive folders that are prepared, of target skills practice, and they are made for each student. We have now chosen an assessment system through Exam View that will help create prescriptions for the targeted students. When we find a considerable number of students have not mastered a particular concept, then we get together and we brainstorm ways to differentiate and re-teach those skills.

One of the most difficult concepts that we have noticed across the board at our middle school is that students have difficulty with fractions, decimals, and percents. And we have begun as an entire school to really focus on trying to enhance those skills. So we have provided a lot of practice; we have made sure that as a group we are all incorporating fractions, decimals, and percents into word problems daily. We have placed them on warm-ups daily, we use that in our assessments, different types of assessments, just to make sure that we are totally saturating the students in these skills because they are so vital.

Our pyramid of intervention just goes from students who are extremely needy, to students who need some intervention but not a lot. So we look at where those students need to be placed; of course, we want the minimum amount of intervention as possible. It has four tiers, where we start off with basic classroom instruction that should work for every student. And then when we realize that that student is not performing at an acceptable level, we have a conference as a group of teachers and we decide that maybe we need to place that student in Tier II. This is where we have our targeted students within Tier II. We have Counselor Watch program, where the counselor keeps an eye on that student and this is where our ELT math comes into play. Within that, we also have not only for the targeted students who are not performing where they should, but this is also an area where we may place a student who is advanced, that we need to give some more challenging work to. But that is all worked into our daily schedule. If that student needs to be in Tier II, we pull them out and place them in the ELT math for that period of time everyday, and that's a 90-minute block and this is a very fluid group. As soon as we see that the student is progressing and things improve, once again as we meet every week, we discuss all of the targeted students and their performance for that week and as soon as we see improvement and it is sustained improvement, then we move those students back into their regular schedule. We have whole faculty study groups here and our math department works together in that, where we may do some research, we might, for instance, one particular semester we looked at common errors that students make in math; and we read about all that, we have studied about it, and that helped us focus on errors and how to help students when they are misunderstanding. And we are constantly doing that type of study, that's a part of what we do here.